

13

THE

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT,

WITH THE

ADDRESS OF THE HON. JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL,

AT THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF THE

BISHOP WHITE

PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY,

May 21st, 1845.

“The solemnities of religion, are in our ritual, performed with modest splendour.
with unassuming state, with mild majesty and sober pomp.

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE.

PHILADELPHIA:
KING & BAIRD, PRINTERS, 9 GEORGE STREET.
1845.

AN APPEAL.

It will be observed by the following Report that the Bishop White Prayer Book Society is now over four hundred dollars in debt, and is, consequently, obliged to decline all applications—which they would fain supply. Shall this be allowed to continue?

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,
Wednesday evening, May 21, 1845.

The twelfth Anniversary of the Bishop White Prayer Book Society, was held this evening, in St. Andrew's Church, at 8 o'clock.

Neither of the clerical Vice Presidents being present, the Rev. Fred'k. Ogilby, of the Church of the Ascension, was called to the chair, who opened the meeting with prayer; after which, a part of the 134th Hymn was sung, when the Annual Report of the Board of Managers was read by its author, the Corresponding Secretary, S. Austin Allibone, Esq., (a copy of which is annexed.)

The Society was then addressed by the Hon. Jos. R. Ingersoll, and the Rev. Mr. Suddards, Rector of Grace church, after which a collection was made in aid of the funds of the Society, amounting to \$77.

On motion of Mr. Latimer, the Chair appointed Messrs. R. B. Aertsen and B. G. Mitchell, a Committee to nominate Officers and Managers for the ensuing year. The Committee retired, and on their return offered the following ticket, which, on motion, was unanimously elected, to wit:

Rt. Rev. Bishop of the Diocese, President, *ex officio*.

Rev. GEORGE BOYD, D.D.

“ WILLIAM SUDDARDS,

“ BENJAMIN DORR, D.D.

WM. H. NEWBOLD,

JOHN WELSH, JR.

} Vice Presidents.

S. AUSTIN ALLIBONE, Corresponding Secretary.

JAMES M. AERTSEN, Recording Secretary.

WILLIAM MUSGRAVE, Treasurer.

MANAGERS.

Rev. S. H. Tyng, D.D.,	George M. Wharton,
“ J. C. Clay, D.D.,	Horace Binney, Jr.,
“ Henry J. Morton, D.D.,	Edmund Wilcox,
“ H. W. Ducachet, D.D.,	Henry Reed,
“ John Coleman, D.D.,	John Grigg,
“ Wm. H. Odenheimer,	Benj. G. Mitchell,
“ Wm. W. Spear,	Herman Cope,
“ Richard Newton,	Francis West, M.D.,
“ Edmund Neville,	Zebulon Locke,
“ Thomas H. Quinan,	Joseph R. Massey,
“ Frederick Ogilby,	M. Errickson,
“ Thomas M. Clark,	Caleb Jones,
S. Littell, Jr., M.D.,	Thomas S. Taylor,
Samuel Wagner,	William Fisher,
Wm. Welsh,	Charles Wingate,
James S. Newbold,	Henry F. Rodney,
Thomas Latimer,	B. C. Buzby,

Alfred Horner.

On motion, it was *Resolved*, That the Report of the Board of Managers, together with the addresses of the Hon. J. R. Ingersoll, and Rev. Wm. Suddards, so far as they can be obtained, be referred to the Board for publication.

After the benediction by the Rev. Chairman, the Society adjourned.

JAMES M. AERTSEN, Secretary.

TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT.

Since the last annual meeting of the Society, the Managers have laboured to exercise a discriminating care in the disposition of the means of usefulness entrusted to their charge. Discrimination is needful, where much must be done with little, and constant caution must temper the ready mind, when the urgency of want would, otherwise, hasten zeal beyond the monitions of prudence.

Although, when comparing the amount of our appropriations with the large extent of the land which we are still obliged to consider as only one of promise,—which we are not “strong enough,” as yet, to “go up and possess,”—we are constrained to exclaim, “what are they among so many?” yet the gracious Author of “every good and perfect gift,” “has not left us without many witnesses,” that the seed, sown in faith, watered by a cheerful labour, and nurtured, in some humble degree, by the spirit of supplication, has been blessed to a bountiful increase.

That this Society can greatly extend its beneficial influence, that it ought to, and can, attain a much higher measure of usefulness than any which it has yet reached, it shall be our object to demonstrate, presently.

The number of Prayer Books distributed during the past business year, from May, 1844, to May, 1845, amounts to five thousand nine hundred and twenty-five copies, and they have been appropriated as follows:—Pennsylvania, 2565; New York, 330; New Jersey, 245; Rhode Island, 200; Massachusetts, 48; Connecticut, 25; Maine, 125; New Hamp-

shire, 98 ; Delaware, 63 ; Virginia, 100 ; Maryland, 50 ; Ohio, 150 ; Kentucky, 50 ; Indiana, 370 ; Alabama, 100 ; Mississippi, 208 ; Missouri, 265 ; Illinois, 50 ; Iowa, 12 ; Nashotah Mission, 400 ; N. Carolina, 74 ; District of Columbia, 20 ; China, 112 ; Seamen, 215 ; U. S. Navy, 50. The distribution for the year ending May, 1844, was 5400 copies ; for the year ending May, 1843, 5395.

At the February meeting of the Board of Managers, attention was directed to the impaired state of the finances ; and, in consideration thereof, it was thought expedient to make an appeal to the Church for aid, which was effected by the publication of the following circular in several of the Church periodicals : “ The Managers of the ‘ Bishop White Prayer Book Society,’ as well to prevent disappointment from the failure of applications, necessarily declined, as with a view to the removal of the exigency which dictates their present action, announce to the Church the temporary suspension of their appropriations.

“ The late sessions of the General and State Conventions, afforded an opportunity for the presentation of demands, unusual in amount and urgent in necessity ; and whilst caution was awakened by the first, zeal was stimulated by the latter ; and the managers were not willing to confer too closely with distrust, when need called for liberality, and have invariably granted all that was desired : not doubting that the Church would justify the willing heart, and replenish the empty hand.

“ As all portions of the country have participated in the benefits of this institution, an opportunity for reciprocation is afforded to all ; and an exhausted treasury, and heavy debt, will not be recognised as grievances, should they prove the means of eliciting renewed evidences of the confidence and affection of the Church in whose behalf they have been incurred.”

The measure of success attending this appeal to the Church,

may be estimated from the simple statement of the fact, that the Society is still a debtor to its publishers in the sum of nearly \$500, and, consequently, still in a state of suspension.

The receipts have been \$903.58; which, with \$24.38, the balance from last year, has been our whole available fund. The receipts have been from the following sources :

From churches and societies,	\$596.62
“ subscriptions and donations,	115.75
“ sales of books,	54.65
“ collection at annual meeting,	136.56
	\$903.58

The expenditures for the year have been	895.78

The present balance in the treasury, is	\$32.18
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The present indebtedness to the publishers is	\$416.26
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The receipts have been from the following States: Pennsylvania, \$784.08; New Hampshire, 13; New Jersey, 60; Virginia, 10; Delaware, 5; Ohio, 21.50; Indiana, 10; total, \$903.50.

We have already stated that the Managers have not been without grateful evidence that a blessing has attended their efforts to promote sound religious knowledge, and excite a healthful spiritual interest by the circulation of the authorised formula of that Church, whose beneficial influence upon mankind they believe will be co-extensive with her establishment and perpetuity, and whose holy cause it is their privilege and duty to serve.

A clergyman, who had made application for a few copies of the Prayer Book, thus “returns to give thanks to God,” and acknowledgment to the Society, for the assistance which their circulation had proved to him, in enhancing the efficiency of his services. “I am happy to express the conviction, that they have been the means of awakening an interest in favour of the Church; and should you have the kindness to send me

fifty additional Prayer Books, they would meet with a thankful and ready reception. I am more than ever persuaded of the importance of the Prayer Book, in diffusing a healthy religious sentiment, and in exciting attention to serious and practical truths."

This testimony of our respected correspondent, cannot fail to gratify us all, as an evidence of the good effected from that which has been done; we shall hardly educe its full measure of profit and encouragement, if we fail to appropriate it as an incitement to renewed effort for the realization of the good which can, and *should*, be done.

And that we may the better appreciate our responsibilities in this particular, let us briefly consider,

The character and extent of the field in which we are called to labour:

What we ought to do: and

What we are actually doing.

Among the many advantages resulting from the character of the institutions of our favored country, it is not to be denied, that the spirit of "pure and undefiled religion," as well as the cause of enlightened liberty, are wont to suffer severely from that licentiousness of freedom, and impatience of even sanatory restraint, which, in its exercise, justifies every man in "doing that which seemeth right in his own eyes," only; and would take the sceptre, which he denies to a despotic government, into his own irresponsible keeping; and arrogate to the dicta of his own private opinions, the infallibility which he, properly enough, refuses to concede to an ecclesiastical arbiter.

It is the tendency of human nature, under all circumstances, to run into extremes; and not only so, but men will adopt, and carry out, principles of action in their own conduct, which they most earnestly protest against in others; and even elevate to the rank of virtues, in their own calendar, obliquities of mental perception, or perversions of moral truth, which they loudly condemn, when they find them in the possession of

their neighbours. There is no such wonderful transmutation as that elaborated in the crucible of mental alchemy, no philosopher's stone which can compare with the priceless value of a favorite theory, or cherished dogma.

Therefore it is, that men who repose with unfounded confidence upon the resolution of their own private, and but very partially instructed judgment, in matters which require the most careful scrutiny, and gravest consideration, refuse to allow any weight to the teaching of experience, and the aggregated wisdom of centuries.

With them, it is a very small thing "that their own voice should decide the controversies of ages, and enunciate positive truth, as a standard of human opinion, but not to be endured, that that holy institution, which the word of inspiration has declared to be "the pillar and ground of the truth," should speak otherwise than with "the stammering lips and faltering tongue" to which they would fain restrain her.

No churchman, at all familiar with the religious aspect of our country, if asked to name our special characteristic, with reference to the truths of religion, would hesitate to rank irreverence as the great national ~~feeling~~ *failing*.

We do not mean, by this term, to designate that irreverence which distinguishes the refinements and sophisms of intellectual scepticism; the hardened ignorance of the blasphemy which denies the inspiration of the written word; or the "foolishness" which saith within its heart, "there is no God;"—we refer to that practical irreverence,—only the more dangerous because unappreciated and disavowed—which, admitting the foundations of eternal truth,—God and His revelation,—in too many cases, rejects the appointments of the one, and, by perversion of interpretation, virtually destroys the efficacy of the other.

When every man becomes his own Ahithophel, and "seeks" of his own crude vagaries, "as it were to the oracles of God," can we wonder that such counsel is turned by the

deceitfulness of human nature, to “foolishness,” and spiritual ruin.

Is it not mournfully true, that the tendency of the spirit of this generation, is rather carefully to avoid, when happily encountered, than to “seek out diligently the old paths that they may walk therein.” Far be it from us, to depreciate the inestimable privilege of the proper use of private judgment; or seek to recall the influence of that blind deference to ecclesiastical authority,—from the thralldom of which, the blood of more than one of “the noble army of martyrs” was not counted too dear to deliver us.

But, as we have already said, and as the world’s experience daily proves, the tendency of man’s nature is to extremes; and it is just because we can see no good reason for being engulfed in either whirlpool, that we seek to extend the influence of that portion of the Catholic Church to which it is our privilege to be attached:—the Church as happily developed in this country—**CATHOLIC AND REFORMED; PROTESTANT AND FREE!** **CATHOLIC**, both with reference to universality of adaptation and design; and as seeking to conserve the integrity of evangelical truth, by the authoritative media of apostolical prescription.

REFORMED, from the “horror of great darkness” of midnight superstition, and the deadly incubus of anti-Catholic dominance.

PROTESTANT, alike with reference to all encumbering additions, or unhallowed mutilations, which we deem calculated to mar the fair symmetry of Christ’s spiritual body.

FREE, as seeking to apply to a proper use those aids to the discovery and appreciation of divine truth, with which we have been mercifully favored, without “using our liberty as a cloak for licentiousness:”—and “Free,” also, as “rendering to Cæsar,” with scrupulous exactness, “those things which are his,” whilst under no hazard, from the pressure of the “unequal yoke” of governmental connection, that those

“eternal things” which belong to God, shall suffer from the time-serving influence which too often dominates in the “kingdoms of this world.” The influence of the rationalistic spirit (so called) which we deplore, has, unfortunately, been too abundant in fruit “after its own kind,” to permit a doubt as to the character of the “tree,” which thus proves, of its own self, that it is not of our Heavenly “Father’s planting.” The neology of Germany, philosophy, “falsely so called,” has not been without a counterpart, in its desolating influence, in our own country. When we look at the heritage of the descendants of the settlers of New England, who, whatever were their errors, had a fervent “zeal of God,” if not always “according to the most enlightened knowledge,” we see “how evil and bitter a thing it is to refuse the guide, when professing a desire to know the way.” What church hath ever contemptuously rejected the “Apostles’ bond and fellowship,” and eventually “prospered?” Can man safely amend the workmanship of the master-builder, we may even say, carefully reject the ecclesiastical corner-stone of that spiritual architecture which is designed to build us up to an “holy temple in the Lord?” And yet, how often do we hear those, whom we cannot doubt to be children of the same Father, whom we endeavour in feebleness to serve, deny the necessity, or legitimacy, of that unbroken succession, which was intended to furnish a continuous line of Apostles and pastors to the Church, and whom Christ has graciously promised to be with “alway, even to the end of the world.”

Nay, the very Sacraments, ordained as channels of redeeming grace, are becoming more and more lightly esteemed; and with many, professedly religious, are rather “signs” which are spoken against, than of reverent use as symbols of an inward and spiritual grace, and seals of the promises of a blessed salvation to a lost and ruined world.

So much for “*the character of the field in which we are called to labor* : it is “ripe for the harvest,” in the sense of

destitution and want of tillage; but how much labor must be bestowed, ere it can be garnered as good fruit, that “both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together!”

The “*extent*” of this field is so vast, that zeal might well despair, were it not that doubt is sinful, and faith has had too many pentecostal triumphs to permit us to question, that, even now, as formerly, it can remove mountains. What, then, as Churchmen, can we do to facilitate that consummation so “*devoutly*” (in the best sense of the term) to be wished for? “Much, every way:” and, as a Society, by the distribution of the prayer-book, we can prepare the way for the ^{full} first development of that Church, whose voice it claims to be. Let it be, as in many cases, it must yet, for a long time, continue, but a “voice in the wilderness,” it will smooth the path of the authorized minister of God, who shall go forth “to gather the dispersed flock,” thus, in no small degree previously instructed, by the teachings of the prayer-book, in the truths of salvation, and when the priests of the Most High approach to advance and mature that knowledge, “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

Nor must we confine our efforts to the *residents* of our country. Our Navy must be supplied with the prayer-book; our army must claim our care; our commercial marine establishment demand our regard, as well. Let not him “who goes down to the sea in ships, and occupies his business in the great waters,” when he is carefully furnished with all the needful appurtenances of his profession;—let him not lack a “*compass*” to guide his way over the trackless waves, the distracting cares of this unquiet world; a “*chart*” to guard him against the *rocks* and *quicksands* of infidelity and profligacy;—a blessed hope which shall be as an “*anchor*” “of his soul, sure and steadfast;” the holy wings of prayer which shall gently waft him “to the haven where he would be;”—even to the blissful harbor of eternal rest!

And now, that we have reviewed the character and extent of the field which invites our hearty sympathy and earnest zeal, let us briefly consider *what we ought to do*.

We should make it our determined effort to place the prayer-book, to the utmost limit of our means, wherever it is needed;—and where is it not needed?—wherever it will be useful;—and where will it not act as a most efficient agent in promoting the good cause for which we “travail in bonds,” because we “are as yet but a few people?”—and, in many parts of the great western territory, especially, almost “strangers in the land.”

We are hardly so sanguine as to suppose that this society, or any other society, can of itself supply this vast vacuum;—but, if it be true, as one of the poets of older times tell us, that

“He that is low need fear no fall;”

it is not less true that

He who *aims low* will never rise:—

and what is true of individuals, is equally so of societies, which are but combinations of individuals. Let the members of the “Bishop White Prayer Book Society,”—let the members of the Church in the United States, determine that the “Bishop White Prayer Book Society” shall place the Prayer Book wherever it is now wanting—and even if they fail to complete this glorious design, they will do much towards it; and they will raise up a spirit of determined zeal which all the exorcisms of infidelity, and the adjurations of the modern sons of Sceva shall fail to lay, even in the mighty waters of the distant west, and the broad bosom of the still farther Pacific. They will surely circulate more than 6000 copies annually of this invaluable formulæ;—this priceless compend of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving;—this authorized exposition of the doctrines and faith of the Church!

Six thousand copies where 60,000 would be inefficient to meet the necessities of the case! Well, indeed, may we ex-

claim, "what are they among so many?" Surely, "these things ought not so to be!" and it shall not so be, if the members of the Church will but awake to a sense of their responsibilities, and to an appreciation of their privileges. For the circulation of the prayer-book is a responsibility if we are persuaded of its adaptiveness to facilitate the object for which we toil;—it is no less a privilege, if we be really in earnest in our professions of love and attachment to the Church to whom it belongs.

Bishops and clergy of the Church in the United States! we earnestly invoke your aid in carrying out the work which you believe, with us, to be that of the Lord; and upon the successful prosecution of which, the welfare of the Church, in no inconsiderable degree, depends. "Wo to that declining church, which hath not a scriptural liturgy!" says one. "Vain would be the effort to *establish* the Church, in its proper efficacy, without a scriptural liturgy," says the voice of infallible experience.

In how many cases has the circulation of a few prayer-books, in a neighborhood, destitute of the ministrations of the Church, resulted in the erection of a temple devoted to the worship and service of the triune God, after the "manner of our fathers!" Some one recipient of a prayer-book, more devout in spirit, or more energetic in action, than others similarly favored, animated by the laudable purpose of subserving the spiritual interests of his neighbors, obtains from his diocesan, the requisite authority as a lay-reader, to lead the devotions of those who may feel a desire to unite with him in celebrating divine worship according to the usages of the Church.

He gives notice to the neighbors and a little band convene at his dwelling, for this holy purpose: the prayer-book soon regains its hold upon the affections of those to whom it is endeared by the hallowed associations of earlier years; and those who have heretofore been strangers to its spirit of chas-

tened devotion, acquire a fervent admiration and love of its expositions and inculcations of saving truth. The rude cabins of the pilgrim settlers become vocal with the acceptable offering of praise and thanksgiving; and the sound of the woodman's axe is relieved by the morning and evening hymn of gratitude to Him in whose "hands are the corners of the earth," and whose is "the strength" of those distant "hills, also." The desolate wanderers from childhood's home now feel that "it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto the name of the Most Highest."

They acknowledge and bless the providential hand who "blesseth the labours of the husbandmen, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease;" who "sendeth the former and the latter rain," cheering their souls with fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with joy and gladness." Nature speaks to them with a new and unaccustomed voice: the lofty mountains and the mighty rivers become eloquent witnesses of the majesty of the "unseen hand;" the evening breeze now whispers a significance and attestation to Deity in its every tone; this "blessed people" have now "the Lord for their God;" they are made glad through His works, "they rejoice in the operations of His hands!"

But still, they are, as yet, "like sheep without a shepherd;" a pastor is called, to break to their hungering "souls the bread of life!" And now, we humbly conceive, we behold, in a measure, the fulfilment of that blessed promise to which we have before referred; "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose!"

Oh then, ye priests of the Most High God! will ye not impress upon your favored flocks, who are in the full enjoyment of the means of grace, and blessings of Church communion, the duty of contributing as God hath prospered them, to the circulation of the Prayer Book. Shall we not earnestly labor to establish that spiritual worship of God, which we

so highly appreciate, and which the eloquent pen of one of the gifted sons of England's noble Church thus fervently eulogizes:

“The worship of God, in public, is a visible act of homage due to Him as the Creator and Preserver of the world, and as the Redeemer and Sanctifier of the Church. It is a solemn approach and address to the Majesty unseen: The Seraphims veil their faces before Him, on high: The Cherubim adore in the glory of His presence: Arch-angels and Angels cry aloud: The heavens, and all the powers therein, night and day worship the Lord of Hosts: The holy Church, throughout all the world, evermore in matin and even song, doth acknowledge and confess the living and true God. It is a *visible creed*; set forth in oblations, chaunts, and bended knees: It is the new-born life, *reaching out its hands* unto the Great Father: Deep calling unto deep: The one baptism calling upon the regeneration of all things: The new creation of God, manifesting itself to the eye of flesh, in the midst of this wrongful and turbulent world. This is the meaning which Angels read in the worship of the Church on earth. Let us read no less. Though nothing else could be said for the public service of God in His Church, let this suffice.”

American Churchmen! do we thus realize the majesty, the dignity, the holy beauty, of the due celebration of the worship of God's Church? Then let us labor to extend its blessings far and wide, by the circulation of the Prayer Book.

Let no Churchman “come up empty before the Lord,” in such a cause as this! Never again permit your agents, who now address you, to make the mortifying announcement to the world, that “the offerings have ceased,” that a consumption has ensued, and “the staff of bread,” upon which we depend for our life, as a society, has been “cut off!”—that our needy missionaries must go away unsupplied with the Prayer Books which they look to receive at our hands:—that

the spiritually “naked and hungry” must be denied those things which we tell them “are convenient for them,” and still remain destitute of the Church’s “daily food.” We may, indeed, “have faith” in the efficacy of our lauded liturgy, but this is “having it to ourselves,” in a sense different from that which the Apostle inculcated, and it were wise to seriously ask ourselves “what will such faith profit either us or them?”

Of the value of the Prayer Book;—of the benefits to be reasonably expected from its wide and extensive circulation, you are fully persuaded.

“And what more shall we say? for the time would fail us to tell of” Cranmer, of Ridley, of Latimer, of Taylor, of Wilson, of Kerr; of our own White, also; and of the other “holy men of whom the world was not worthy,” who, by the instrumentality of the Prayer Book, subdued prejudice, “wrought righteousness,” obtained converts, “stopped the mouths of adversaries:” Wherefore, Right Reverend Bishops, Pastors, and Children of the Church, “seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,” “let us not be weary in well doing,” for the promotion of those religious principles which we believe to be eminently calculated to subserve the best interests of man. “Hold up our hands” then, in the great work for which we labor, *the recovery and salvation of fallen men, through the authorised ministrations of the ordinances and appointments of God.*

J. M. AERTSEN, *Secretary.*



Philadelphia, 22d May, 1845.

REV. WILLIAM SUDDARDS:

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—At the annual meeting of the “Bishop White Prayer Book Society,” held last evening, a resolution was passed—

“That the Addresses delivered by the Rev. Mr. SUDDARDS,

and the Hon. JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL, before the Society, this evening, be published with the Annual Report."

In conformity with the above resolution, I beg, my dear sir, that you will furnish me, at your convenience, with a copy, so far as recollection may serve, of your eloquent Address of last evening, and thus enable me to execute the instructions of the Society.

Allow me to add, in my personal capacity, the expression of my hope, that your numerous engagements may not prevent your concession to the wish of the Society; as I am satisfied that the good cause we have so much at heart will be greatly benefited by the course proposed.

Very truly, dear sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant and friend,

S. AUSTIN ALLIBONE, *Cor. Sec.*
Bishop White Prayer Book Society.

—♦—
Philadelphia, June 3d, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR:—Absence from the city, until yesterday, has prevented the acknowledgment of the receipt of yours of the 22d ult. at an earlier period.

I am sorry that I cannot comply with the request of the "Bishop White Prayer Book Society," as stated in your communication. The Address which I delivered at the anniversary, was in the midst of a most interesting and important convention, when there was little time for thought, or preparation; and my argument for the Prayer Book, and the affection which the children of the Church feel for that invaluable formula, being drawn from my *own experience*, and illustrated by a portion of *my own history*, I should be unwilling to print for public gaze, what I was not unwilling to utter in the hearing of kind and forbearing friends.

With earnest prayers for the prosperity of the Society,

I remain, dear sir, affectionately yours.

WILLIAM SUDDARDS.

S. AUSTIN ALLIBONE, *Cor. Sec.*

Bishop White Prayer Book Society.

ADDRESS OF THE HON. JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL.

After the very interesting and eloquent report which has just been read, comment and argument would seem to be in a great degree superfluous. I would myself not venture to hazard a remark that might possibly disturb its influence, were it not for the invitation from the chair which I do not feel at liberty to resist. Perhaps the interests of this almost entirely spiritual association, might most safely be confided to the especial care of spiritual men. To a cause however so pure and so benevolent, so well calculated to do permanent and extensive good, so full of disinterested as well as virtuous purposes,—all may present their offerings without intrusion, and the mite of the lay, as well as the mass of the active influence of the clerical members of the church, may, not without usefulness, be contributed.

Every one can appreciate the value of prayer. It is an evidence in outward and practical expression, of those inward devotional sentiments, which are necessarily inseparable from piety, and without which morality itself would have a precarious and a frail control over human conduct. Every one can appreciate the importance of diffusing widely both the sentiments of devotion ^{and} as an index and an incentive to their cultivation and growth, the disposition and the power and the habit and the facility of the utterance of them. The instinctive tendencies of a well-balanced mind lead to the worship of God. Every thing around us and within us shows the influence of infinite power and wisdom, and our own dependence and imbecility. We naturally cherish a feeling of adoration towards the Being that is above us, and of reliance upon him for support and protection amid the chances

of an uncertain world. If there be any gratitude, it dictates thanksgiving for what is past;—and experience unites with hope, in suggesting an humble supplication for future blessings.

Prayer is not only prompted by the unbiased movements of a reflecting and a grateful heart. It is urged by precept and example in the written word of inspiration. It would not be easy to point out any particular duties which above all others are more strenuously insisted on in the Scriptures. None of the vital principles of human conduct are overlooked, while none are pre-eminently enjoined to the delay or hindrance of the rest. It is the charm of that sacred volume that it neither essentially postpones, nor exclusively prefers, any of the wise behests of the Creator, or any of the corresponding obligations upon his creatures of the human race. Laying down certain rules as the basis upon which all allegiance depends—the fear of God and observance of his will—minute details of duty, and specific enumerations of all the long catalogue of items which go to make up the sum total of a perfect code of laws, are shadowed forth in broad and obvious outline which renders each in similar degree and equal sanctity as binding as the rest. But the Old and the New Testaments are replete with instances and virtually with instructions, showing the necessity, the efficacy, and the duty of prayer. The worshipper is led insensibly to a conviction of its sublimity as a mysterious bond of intercourse with the Most High. He is led with no less confidence to seek it as an immediate source of consolation to a troubled spirit, and in good time for the sake of its, regulated indeed and possibly remote but hallowed, influences upon his communion with mankind. Whatever may be our proneness to error, how uncontrolled soever our spirit, and ordinarily regardless of its final destiny, there is a season which may happen to all men, when the most unruly passions are put to rest. It is that serene and tranquil moment, of however rare occurrence in the lives of most

men, when all their affections are absorbed in this holy exercise. Who is so lost to the finer sensibilities of his nature as to be capable of indulging in criminal designs while he is holding high converse with his Maker? What heart is so callous to the influence of heavenly association as not to undergo at least a short-lived separation from impure thoughts, at such an hour? I speak not of an outward seeming of devotion. Appearances may be assumed without a particle of religious sentiment beneath them. Hypocrisy is truly said to be the homage which vice pays to virtue. It is at least an acknowledgment of the beauty of religion extorted from its opponents. It is the strongest evidence, afforded by those who have no interest, as they conceive, in the cause of piety, and dare not or do not aspire to its profession, how much they esteem its observances and those who practise them, and how gladly they would avail themselves of the advantages which its very appearance can create in the estimation of the wise. If indeed actual companionship could exist between a mortal and immortal being, between man and his Maker, such a relation would protect him from all tendencies to error. Bad actions would not be perpetrated, for evil inclinations could not arise. Fervent prayer approaches as nearly to this divine companionship as human nature can attain. It brings with it an assurance of the immediate presence of that Being, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and in the firmness of that assurance it furnishes a barrier to the allurements of sin.

Some of the sublimest conceptions recorded in the Bible are in the shape and on the occasion of prayer. The best and the wisest men, whose examples are selected from the myriads of the human family for the instruction and imitation of mankind, are conspicuous for the fervency of their aspirations to the throne of grace. David blessed the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever, before all the congregation of the princes and the people that he had "assembled unto Jerusa-

lem," and ascribed to him greatness, and power, and glory, and victory, and praise. David's yet wiser son, when he had erected a temple worthy of the worship of the Most High, kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and poured forth supplications solemn and sublime, that the Lord God of Israel, whom the heavens and the heaven of heavens were not able to contain, would hear the prayers of his people, and when he should hear, would mercifully forgive. To him would that people look for succor in time of famine and pestilence, blasting or mildew, when enemies should besiege their cities, or plague or sickness should desolate the land. Daniel was speaking in prayer and confessing his sin and the sin of his people about the time of the evening oblation, when at the beginning of his supplications the responsive commandment came forth from the lips of an angel, whose body was like the chrysolite, and his face like the lightning, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. Well might he confide in the efficacy of prayer, who had already defied the stratagems of rulers and the decrees of tyrants, and in utter disregard of the wiles of the one and the power of the other, had gone into his house, and his window being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, had kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and praised his God as he did aforetime. Thus prepared for every danger, armed with virtuous innocence and assured of the protection of heaven, he passed unhurt through the fiery furnace, and the lion's den.

The lessons of the New Testament are no less unequivocal. Christians are there enjoined to continuance and constancy in prayer. It is peculiarly appropriate to the purposes of this Society, that the noblest sermon that ever was delivered contains the simplest and yet the most comprehensive of prayers. That prayer is itself a form now universally adopted. We are told by Bishop Horne that it was such when prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. It was even then known as a

Jewish homily, and not originally uttered from the lips of the divine speaker.

If there be efficacy in prayer, and it be a duty to practise it, if indeed it be the first important step in a career of piety, how meritorious are they who facilitate and augment its exercise? To the large classes of the ignorant and the depraved, means of prayer would be inaccessible were it not for the exertions of this and similar associations. It is no argument in disproof of the value and merit of their efforts that they are directed towards reluctant objects, who may not desire interposition in their behalf. The whole design of the gospel is to invite the unwilling, to recall those who are voluntary wanderers, to bring sinners to repentance. Were mankind already virtuously inclined, and, especially, had they become firmly established in good principles, and proof against the evil temptations and seductions which every where surround them, there would be little occasion for the exertions of the benevolent. If not already possessed of necessary aids and incentives to a continuance in well doing, they would seek them for themselves and provision would scarcely be required from strangers. On the other hand, lost indeed would be the mass of men if not reclaimed by the few who are charitable. Example is contagious. Evil communications corrupt, more readily than good ones purify. The way of the transgressor, though hard in reality, is seemingly and in its outset smooth and alluring. He must be taught the error of his ways, the peril of his condition, the certainty of the perdition that awaits him,—or his own intuition will prove a feeble monitor.

Large classes of the human family are incapable of furnishing themselves with means of religious exercise, even if an occasional ray of celestial light gleams upon their humble habitation, and a responsive aspiration sometimes ascends to heaven. Poverty and ignorance combined must fix a narrow limit to the view of piety, if it be not enlarged and elevated

by instruction from the benevolent. Books of devotion are inaccessible to those whose daily earnings are required for their daily bread. There are many who have not power to earn the scantiest subsistence, who derive even their morsel of humble food from the hand of charity. Inmates of hospitals and poor houses! The helplessly infirm! The aged and sick! What should they do unaided, towards a religious life? Place in their hands the Book of Prayer—if they have the rudest elements of education,—or go with them in kindly fellowship over its sublime and simple lessons, and they are at once provided with spiritual food.

Not less destitute of the knowledge and the practice of piety, if left to themselves, would be a large proportion of those whose lives are chiefly spent upon the ocean. Distant from all the ordinary sources of instruction, seamen are especially strangers to incentives to a religious life. Place among them the book of Common Prayer and opportunity is at once afforded for gaining habits of devotion, if but a small part of each particular crew be able to read its varied and comprehensive instructions to the rest.

But there is a class far more degraded than any that has been alluded to, who stand more than all others in need of assistance from associations such as this. What must be the consolation of the tenant of a prison, the condemned and wretched criminal, shut out almost from sympathy, if he can find companionship and ever cheering employment, and pure and holy exercise in the perusal and use of the book of prayer? The sacred Scriptures teach him how to live and how to die. They are and ever should be foremost in his view, and in the view of those who pity him. But next to them, and first of merely human sources of relief, contributing indeed, and largely assisting him in seeking the purely divine Source of Consolation, is this Book of Common Prayer.

Wise and holy examples, precepts of prophets and apostles, proofs and illustrations drawn from the very fountain of

celestial light, and exhibited through the medium of inspiration, no less than human observation and experience, concur in commending to the fervent exercise of men, this pious office. If all ages, the rude as well as the enlightened have in some shape adopted it; if all nations, heathen and Christian, barbarous and civilized, have, with different rites and ceremonies, practically conformed to it, may it not be regarded as a prompting of universal nature, besides and before its recognition in the revealed word of God? Confirmation too strong for doubt is given in that word that it is invited by stronger and more positive dictates than the instinctive impulses of the human heart. Doubt might linger upon the divine assistance which restored to health the pious king of Israel, and prolonged his days after the decree had gone forth that he should die. A miracle might not be discernible in the renewed energy of his debilitated body, which might have been bestowed by human skill alone. But when the visible shadow measured back its degrees upon the dial, and the sun himself obeyed the supplication of the doomed and prostrate monarch, no mortal hand was there. The days of miracles have gone; but the divine injunction of which they were once the illustration, will endure for ever. Although no especial prominence be given to any particular duties in the long catalogue which is prescribed for us, yet there is one overruling principle, one supreme law, which pervades them all. It is the principle and the law of obedience to the will of God. Short-sighted mortals may not be able to perceive the ends of providence. They may differ in their conclusions, or blindly grope for reasons, or fail to perceive the wisdom, or wildly imagine improvements, or foolishly speculate upon the operations of the paramount law in any or all of its injunctions. Let them reflect that "great is the mystery of godliness." It often happens that the line of human knowledge is far too short to penetrate the depths of immeasurable wisdom. It is our duty in all such cases patiently to submit and de-

voutly to adore. If an Almighty power exist, and its ordinances are clearly made known, nothing is left but obedience—prompt and cheerful compliance with the eternal will. This is practical faith. It is the evidence of sincerity and the pledge of piety. No lessons are more strictly taught, no duties more sternly exacted than the lessons and the duties of implicit and uncompromising obedience, without regard to the precise character of the command, and without explanation, and without apprehension of the reasonableness of the thing enjoined. Infinite Wisdom cannot be justly judged in any of its operations by finite capacity. Wisdom may consist in the mere act of obedience, without analyzing the ingredients of the act performed. Destruction may fall upon the rebellious spirit when its pride and folly are made manifest, upon occasions seemingly disproportioned to the magnitude of the penalty. Measured by human reason, how small was the transgression by which our first parents lost the world! They thought they partook of pleasant fruit. They knew that they disobeyed the word of God. Measured by the same reason, how incomprehensible was the sacrifice required of Abraham, whose prompt compliance was the first great step towards the redemption of mankind! He thought he was to slay his son. He knew that he obeyed the word of God.

It would seem to be a needless effort to urge upon this assembly, or the extensive circles of which it is the representative, the necessity of fostering a society which is founded upon the best principles of pious charity. I feel that I have little right to plead the cause, itself so eloquent, before an audience already familiar with its merits and predisposed to give it every generous support. Yet it must not be forgotten that the exertions which long were crowned with eminent success because they were stimulated by the liberality of the benevolent, are now comparatively languishing from the want of continued encouragement. The report has informed

us that the “offerings have ceased,” and that the Society has been compelled to refuse donations of Prayer Books within the last few months from the want of funds. While the power of doing good is far short of the desires of the active officers of this Society, their zeal is unabated, and they have failed in no duty that has devolved upon themselves. Nearly every state and territory of our country has received Prayer Books at their hands. Within the year which this month terminates, it appears that five thousand nine hundred and twenty-five have been distributed. Let these disinterested men be supplied with ample means, and their past labors afford the best assurance that they will not weary in well-doing. They will continue to merit and receive the gratitude of the poor and penitent whom they have solaced in their wretchedness, and taught the ways of piety. They will merit and receive the approving thanks of their country—and the blessings of their God.

